Homerun Haggerty

BY GEORGE WILLIAM DALEY.

When Pleiades Peterkin got us all into the Autowindile and started for Mars he told us how many miles we had to go, but I've forgotten the exact number. It was quite a ways, I know that, but the autowindile was a fast boat, and he said he could push her to the limit, as there wouldn't be any stars to watch out for for some time.

Say, if any one ever sings "Come and Take a Ride in My Airship" to you, don't do it. You'll be disappointed. I thought we had had the limit of t'ree-some trips the time we sailed for ninety-two days out of Frisco in a schooner an' got wrecked on the Island o' Fulobenes, and discovered old man Robinson an' his nine o' trained monks an' the goriller that ketched behind the bat. But the trip on the autowindile laid over that for tiresomeness. Part o' the reason was that you had to stay cooped up in the cigar-shaped body o' the machine, not knowin' at what minute the engine or one o' the canvas wings 'ud bust an' we'd start for glory whoopin'. It wasn't very restful to be always expectin' a thing like that, an' yet not be where you could see the fun when it happened. I began to realize what it means to a bunch o' blind kittens to be dropped off a bridge in a grainsack.

Rufe Gibson, our right fielder, who is a callous cuss, said he didn't figger that we'd have any better chance of gettin' out whole if we was up on deck than where we were; but he couldn't realize any of a man's finer feelin's, anyway, an' we ignored him. All he was good for was ball playin' an' stowin' away grub.

On the schooner goin' to Fulobenes Island you could jump overboard occasionally for a swim, keepin' an eye out for sharks, an' have a good time in other ways, but on the autowindile there was no chance of that. If you jumped off the planet that was exertin' the most influence on things just then would attract you to it, and you'd go fast—so fast that w'en you struck they'd come out with a dustpan an' brush an' some grease destroyer to clean you off the scenery. I asked Pleiades how it 'ud be if two planets wanted a feller with the same attraction—would he be safe an' just drift in the clouds—an' Pleiades said the theory seemed all right, but he wouldn't bet on it, nor try it, neither. You see, the attractions up in the sky were just like currents of water in the ocean to our ship. We were beatin' against the earth's attraction for a long time, till the state o' Kansas got so it looked like a pin head, an' then we got into the moon's attraction current an' steered out o' that for Jupiter's attraction current, and Pleiades said that as soon as we hit old Mars' attraction current we'd be safe an' sound an' no trouble but to stop the machine.

We durn near got wrecked on a couple o' small stars that was all black an' just laid in the air dead with no lights. Pleiades said they was shootin' stars, an' had burned out an' wasn't no good no more. "They correspond to the icebergs that I've read about in your oceans down in the earth. It'd go hard with us if we hit one of 'em. If one o' them star points jabbed through one o' my sails it'd be good night for a partic'lar fine bunch o' ball players."

That seemed to make Josh Hapgood jealous, for he says:

"Snucks with your encomiums of your own abilities," says he. "If we hit one o' them stars it'd mean the untimely demise o' the cleverest ball manager that ever sobered up a boozy pitcher, likewise a pot."

"Oh, I dont' know!" says Pleiades, who didn't seem to like Josh's superior bearin'. "You don't run one-two-forty-leven with the managers up in Mars. Why? Because they have so much more time in w'ich to show off. Now in your league you play about eight months, don't you—about 240 days in the year?"

Josh nodded.

"Well, up in Mars we got it fixed so's the years is 687 days long, an' we play every day. You want to figger that we're 47,000,000 miles nearer the sun than you are, an' they ain't no winter."

That kind o' took the wind out o' Josh.

"When we finish one season we jump right in an' start another the next day," he says. "It ain't no wonder that we got it on you in cleverness w'en we play so much more than you—when we never quit, so to speak. No wonder the one-hand rule was put in effect—no wonder it's two strikes is out an' three balls take your base. The game has got to be harder when the players is so much cleverer."

Them two was always arguin' or chewin' the rag or somethin'.

I lost track o' the days we'd been away from home, and it was gettin' very tiresome to see nothin' but clouds an' air an' stars an' hear the chug-chug of the p'peller an' Josh Hapgood keepin' in time with it. We was all gettin' cross-grained an' ready to fight when one day Pleiades sings out that we're in the Mars attractive current an' now we'll see God's own country. How he come to know anything about that party I didn't think to ask.

We hit Mars next day, and mebbe it wasn't hot. The swelterin'est day on the Kansas prairies wasn't a marker to it. The day the home plate melted down to wire grass can't be mentioned in the same breath. When we got to the ball grounds we found the grandstand an' bleachers o' fireproof wood, an' the plate an' bags was asbestos, an' the fences 'round the grounds was steel plate.

"No chance o' batterin' them down," says I. "You got to put 'em over."

Before I'd been in Mars a day I wanted to go home 'thout playin' any ball. My nose got burned f'm the wire in my mask w'en I went out to practice. I put on my pneumatic chest p'tector an' the air in it got so hot that finally I was lifted up a dozen or so feet, an' the hot winds o' Mars began pushin' me up, up, up, till it looked like I'd start for the earth or the sun on a little airship of my own. Pleiades had to hook up to autowindile on' come after me. After that I wore a cork chest p'tector so's not to take chances.

What galled me most was the fact that w'ile us fellers f'rom the earth was losin' 'leven pounds o' fat a minute, an' had to tie sponges on our heads to keep the sweat out of our eyes, them Mars galoots jest pranced 'round, cool an' collected, snappin' things up one-handed, and thinkin' no more o' their stunts than a girl pickin' berries. I seen righ away that w'en the champeenship series o' games began with the Plantvilles the next day we'd prob'ly come in for a nice, sweet trimmin'.

I says that to Reggie Van Rensselaeer, an' he gives me the laugh.

"Jest because you're a long ways f'm home don't lose your nerve, you big kid," says he. "These guys may be up to date an' all that; but they don't know the spit ball, that's point number one; an' two strikes is out, that's point number two; and to tell you the truth, I don't see how we c'n lose."

Then he stuk his nose in the air an' went on battin' out flies; an uncommon good pitcher, but very much stuck on himself. I didn't share his confidence, though I was ready to fight w'ile there was a shot in the locker.

The next day began the greatest game that the Alfalfas ever went into. The asbestos grandstand an' bleachers was crowded with a hot bunch o' Mars people that didn't seem to mind the heat, and they were ready to go crazy any minute. They only wanted the Plantvilles to do something to make it hotter than ever.

That game run along for six innin's without a score. Reg had the spit ball workin' fine, and there seemed no chance of Mars scorin', though the betters lunged at the ball like they wanted to send it back to Kansas.

There was spry set o' outfielders on the Plantvilles, and that kep' me from don' much in the way of hittin'. Those three fielders'd go diggin' out on the laver beds that made up the outfield and scoop in drives that would have homers anywheres else. And the steel fences made it impossible to get any further than second when you plugged out a liner that they couldn't get on the fly.

In the seventh innin', though, I seen that Reg was in trouble. He wound up a couple o' times an' sent in wide ones that I just got on my bare hand, and then I walked out to the box.

Reg's face was pale.

"Good heaven to gosh, Hag," says he. "We're done. We're up against it. Might's well take the count now."

"Wot's the trouble?" says I.

"Can't work the spit ball any more," says he.

"Why not?" says I, makin' b'lieve I was givin' him signals.

"Cause the spit's all gone," says he. "It's turned to cotton!"

Blame 'f it hadn't. He couldn't get no moisture on that ball; no, not if he'd put it in his mouth to once, like the giant in Brobdingnag did.

I was stumped for a minute, an' then I says:

"Give up the spit ball," says I. "Try the sweat ball."

"How's that?" says Reg.

"Try the sweat ball," says I. "Rub it on your face, where them beads o' prespiration is, an' you'll get a shoot on it that'll make 'em jump for cover."

Reg caught on, an' he did it. Every time he threw a ball he'd rub it on his forrid or the back of his neck, an' the moisture was plenty. B'sides, the tobacker juice didn't spatter when it hit the mitt as it did usually, for Reg don't sweat tobacker yet—though he ought to, for he chews enough.

For twenty-six long innings then it went, them fannin' out on the perspired pellet right along, and us gettin' men on the bags most every innin', but sharp fieldin' cuttin' us off. An' then I pulled off a trick on 'em.

As I said, the field was mostly laver, somethin' like asphalt, only soft an' springy. The heat kep' it that way. They have to have big canals in Mars to keep the laver cool, or the hull blame thing'd run together in a melted mass.

I saw a hole about half-way to the pitcher's box, in the thirty-seventh inning, that looked like it might lead to somethin' if I could place a good one right. As I said, it was no use to try to bang 'em over the fielders' heads, for you couldn't do that; so my mind went back to Silversand, the time I drove the ball into the ground in front of the plate, and they had to get a pickax to get it out; and when the pitcher sent up a lollypop drop curve, I fell on it, and drove it straight for that hole in the laver.

I felt a shakin' and springin' as I tore for first base that made it seem as though the hull o' Mars was tryin' to turn over in bed; there was a lot o' yellin' from the grandstand, and I saw a scared look on the second baseman's face as I flashed by him. Then, as I rounded third, I saw the reason for it.

Right there, midway between the pitcher's box an' home, a big, bubbling, boiling fountain o' pitch an' laver was springin' up, gettin' higher every minute, and roaring furious as a catamount coacher. I stopped.

"Come on in," yelled Pinch.

"An' git burnt up?" I answered.

"Slide," yelled Pete Brown.

"Not on your bird cage," says I.

And the next minute the pitch flowed over an' over, an' covered up the home plate, and the audience had to hustle out for fear it'd bubble up into the grandstand and burn their feet.

After the excitement had died down a bit the empire came out an' says that it was an unfortunate case, but he couldn't see any way out but declare the game called on account of the diamond boilin' over."

"Then we don't win?" says I. "How can you?" says he. "You ain't touched home plate yet. You got to do that to score a run."

"But there ain't any home plate," says I. "This is a roast." (It was a boil, I should have said. But I was hot. So was everything else.)

"I can't help that," says he. "This game is called. It'll be finished tomorrow, when the diamond cools down."

Remembering what Pleiades had said about a square deal, no more an' no less, for every team in Mars, we could not kick. But it seemed stretching things a bit. We made a ground rule calling for two bases on a boil-over for the next day, and packed up our bats.

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Husband of the Future.

(New York Globe.)

First Clubwoman (a few years hence)—Men are enough to drive a woman crazy.

Second Clubwoman—Indeed, they are.

First Clubwoman—Only think! For five nights last week I remained at the club terribly late, and yet when I went home I didn't find my husband waiting at the top of the stairs to upbraid me for neglect. The heartless brute was in bed, sleeping like a top, and actually smiled in his dreams.

BITTER DAYS FOR THE SOUTH RECALLED BY DEATH OF MAJOR BURKE IN HONDURAS

(Richard Weightman in Chicago Tribune.)

The reported death in Honduras of Major E. A. Burke, formerly treasurer of Louisiana and the founder of the Times-Democrat newspaper of New Orleans, recalls the most tragic and eventful period in the history of the state—the period of reconstruction. Few of the chief actors in that thrilling drama now survive. W. P. Kellogg, governor of Louisiana from 1873 to 1877, and afterwards United States senator for a full term, now lives in Washington, John McEnery, Davidson Penn, Fred Ogden, Brickell, Burns, Choppin, most of the prominent members of the White league of those days, have passed.

Reconstruction ceased finally when Grant withdrew the bayonets in 1877, but it was suspended once—on the 14th of September, 1874—under dramatic circumstances andto that event Kellogg, Burke, Ogden, Longstreet and A. S. Badger, recently deceased, contributed both potently and picturesquely.

Beginning of a Historic Day.

On the morning of that historic day a militia command undertook to march down the river front to the wharf of one of the Cromwell steamers, just in from New York, and take to their armory a lot of rifles and ammunition which they had bought and paid for. This under the militia law of that time they had a perfect right to do, but Governor Kellogg was convinced that the arms were to be used for purposes of violence in the approaching campaign, and he made up his mind the company should not have them. The troops of the barracks—the Thirteenth infantry, I think—had been sent away shortly before on account of a yellow fever alarm, and were then at Holly Springs, Miss. Governor Kellogg therefore had for the defense of his government only a semi-military body known as the "Metropolitan police," but it was composed of experienced veterans and commanded by General A. S. Badger, formerly of Maine, as brave a soldier and as willing and loyal a fighter as had marched with either flag during the civil war.

It was known as early at Saturday, the 12th, that the militia intended to have their guns if it took a battle to get them, and that the White league would support them if necessary. After a long and heated consultation with his trusted counselors, Kellogg at last consented to telegraph to Holly Springs for the troops. He did this reluctantly, for he was a man without fear, as fond of warfare as any man I ever knew.

Where Major Burke Came In.

The dispatch was sent and answered the troops would be in New Orleans on Monday morning. There is where Burke came in. He held some important and responsible post in the Illinois Central, over whose tracks the Thirteenth infantry would have to come if they expected to reach town in time. Burke, a confederate veteran, promptly communicated the plans to the White league leaders, and there was another consultation.

Things looked dark for the southerners. Of course, if the troops reached New Orleans there would be nothing doing. The White league had no quarrel with the United States; never resisted its authority under any circumstances. One junior lieutenant with a corporal's guard would be enough to send every White leaguer in New Orleans to cover. They adopted that policy at the outset and never relaxed for a moment, no matter what the provocation. Finally, when all the rest of them had talked a good deal, though without throwing the faintest light on the dilemma, Burke was asked for a sentiment. He said at once:

"As I understand, you want to meet the issue Kellogg has raised and are prepared to do it if the United States troops can be held off. Are you sure you can win if you have all day Monday with a free hand?"

They said they were. "Very well," says Burke. "Those soldiers won't get to New Orleans until the day is all over. No. I shall not explain myself further. You can trust me or not as you prefer. I'll do my part, anyhow."

And he did. Next morning at 5 o'clock, a couple of hours' run north of New Orleans, the train with the Thirteenth infantry aboard was flagged by the foreman of a working gang, and there were two or three miles of rails piled up along the track, while Burke noisily bossed a job of urgent ballasting and general repairs.

What happened in town is already history. The White league, under Ogden, swept Kellogg's "Metropolitan police" off the face of the earth in half an hour, although the latter were perfectly armed and had a battery of Gatling guns besides. It must have been the bitterest moment in stout old Longstreet's life—for he was then adjutant general of the state under Kellogg—when he heard the rebel yell of the White leaguers charging and had to turn and run away from the men he had led to victory so often.

Like Chapter of Romance.

Burke's life after that is a chapter out of romance. He left the service of the Illinois Central, went into politics and journalism, controlled the Democratic machine for years, and was the most conspicuous, and, in many ways, the most interesting figure in Louisiana. A Democratic faction arose bitterly opposed to him. He was an interloper, they said, a stranger and adventurer of whose origin and antecedents no one knew anything for certain. They were of the old regime and they resented his power. They beat him socially, and for many years he beat them in politics.

Out of this vicious clash two duels grew. I acted as Burke's second in one when he fought Hearsey, editor of The States—fought with pistols at ten paces, and fired and received three different shots without injury to either party. Two braver men never lived, but neither knew the first thing about pistol shooting or could hit a haystack at point blank range with a shotgun.

His next affair was with Harrison Parker, then editor of the Picayune, and at the fifth fire Parker managed to shoot him through the thigh.

I see it stated in some of the comments on Burke's death that he once cowhided Governor Kellogg on Canal street. That is not true. He could no more have cowhided William Pitt Kellogg than pick up the custom house and swim across the river with it. What he did was to jump on the step of the governor's victoria as he drove by on his way home and try to cowhide him. Burke was a powerful man, the most perfectly proportioned athlete I have ever seen, but when he reached over the side of that victoria and undertook to drag Kellogg from the vehicle he tackled a job far beyond his powers. Kellogg shook him off into the street as though he were a child. Burke fired at him as the vehicle rolled along, but as I have shown marksmanship was not his metier.

His Flight to Honduras.

It was during the Blaine-Cleveland campaign of 1884 that Louisiana's money leaked out of the treasury over which Burke presided. Nobody believed then or believes now that Burke took the money for himself. He fled to Honduras and stayed. I don't think the faction that had fought for him so stubbornly wanted him brought to trial. They had driven their enemy out of the country and that was enough. They had a well defined idea, I fancy, as to where that money went during the Blaine-Cleveland campaign of 1884.

Burke was a gallant fellow, generous, loyal, true to his obligations at all times. Kellogg is of Vermont origin. He was born in Montpelier, in the same town that Admiral Dewey was. Early in life he moved to Illinois. He was one of the electors of that state and helped to nominate Lincoln in 1860. He served in the union army, was appointed collector of the port at New Orleans by Grant, was subsequently governor and senator of Louisiana, and now, after those stormy years of reconstruction, in the perils of which he actually rejoiced, I do believe, he is spending the afternoon of his life in peace and plenty.

Hale, erect, active, alert, vigorous as the average man of 40, we see him every day upon our streets, and I, for one, am always glad to clasp his hand.